Partnering for Better Systems Development: The RISCS Project

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EPA's Office of Air and Radiation (OAR) partnered with the Office of Environmental Information (OEI) to develop the Radiation Information System for Cleanup Sites (RISCS) as a repository for publicly-available, descriptive information on radiation site cleanups in the United States and its territories. Radiation site cleanup information is collected by multiple cleanup programs conducted under the authority of different federal, state, and tribal agencies. It is envisioned that a single repository of radiation site cleanup information will support better analysis of radiation cleanup at a national level, afford cleanup professionals easy access to radiation site cleanup information nationwide, and provide organized radiation site cleanup information to the public.

RISCS represents a model for future application development. The development team modeled applicable data standards to form the basis for designing the database. This approach supports design reuse in development of new or reengineered applications. Having this database structure early on in the development life cycle can reduce application development costs and ensures conformity with data standards. This physical Oracle database implementation can be pre-populated with all standard code sets from the Facility Registry System (FRS) and the Environmental Data Registry (EDR). Therefore, this structure can provide the design, physical structure, and data to satisfy new application developers and existing applications needing to become compliant with the data standards.

RISCS is designed to fully leverage features of EPA's System of Registries. Site description information for RISCS was initially drawn from information in the FRS. Currently, facility information needs to be updated through a manual refresh process, but a future version will link RISCS to the FRS so that facility data is updated automatically. RISCS contaminant identification information is provided from the Substance Registry System (SRS). RISCS uses the Environmental Metadata Gateway to link to detailed information in the SRS. In the future, RISCS will link to the EDR to enable storage of its metadata (tables and data elements), which will make application design available for query and reuse.

RISCS can be found at www.epa.gov/radiation/cleanup/riscs/index.html